

The opinions of the farmers and the inhabitants of the rural areas on the sale of land to foreigners

summary of research results

The Institute of Public Affairs has conducted a survey on the opinions of the rural population in the perspective of European integration. The survey was carried out in June 1999 on a sample of the inhabitants of rural areas (N=707) and farmers (N=437). What follows is a summary of the results in the part relating to the attitudes towards the issue of the right of citizens of EU member states to buy land in Poland. The full project report will be published in September this year.

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The general support for the integration with the European Union has fallen quite sharply, which is in line with the nation-wide tendencies. However, the decrease of support (measured by the declarations of the intentions of voting in the EU accession referendum) is much sharper among the farmers than among the Polish public opinion at large. While over the last 15 months the number of opponents among the general public has risen from 19 to 26 per cent, among the farmers this number has gone up from 21 to 45 per cent.

Table 1. The support of *rural population* for the integration of Poland with the European Union (in %)

If a referendum were to be held in Poland on the accession to the European Union, would you vote:		
	March 1998	June 1999
in favour of the UE accession	57	36
against the UE accession	11	22
or else	16	28
you wouldn't take part in the referendum		
don't know	16	14

Source: Institute of Public Affairs¹

¹ See Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Jacek Kucharczyk *Negotiations with the European Union - Polish Opinions*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 1998.

Table 2. The support of *farmers* for the integration of Poland with the European Union (in %)

If a referendum were to be held in Poland on the accession to the European Union, would you vote:		
	March 1998	June 1999
in favour of the UE accession	25	23
against the UE accession	21	46
or else	23	18
you wouldn't take part in the referendum		
don't know	31	13

Source: Institute of Public Affairs

One should stress the differences between the evolution of the attitudes of the farmers and the rural population in general. The farmers have a much more negative attitude towards the integration than the rural inhabitants in general. The percentage of EU integration supporters among the farmers has remained the same, but the number of opponents has significantly grown. The percentage of the opponents is the highest (61%) among the farmers who own relatively large farms (above 10 hectares)

In general two thirds of the farmers thought that the integration with the European Union will bring the Polish agriculture more threats than benefits.

Table 3. The views of farmers on the sale of lands to foreigners

Do you think that the foreigners should or should not have the right to buy land in Poland?		
	rural population	farmers
They definitely should have such a right	3	1
They rather should have such a right	10	8
They definitely should not have such a right	20	21
They rather should not have such a right	63	68
Don't know	4	2

Source: Institute of Public Affairs

Altogether 89% of farmers are of the opinions that foreigners should not have the right to buy land in Poland. This opinion concerns different nationalities in more or less the same degree.

Table 4. The opinions on the sale of lands to foreigners of different nationalities (in %)

Do you think that the following nationals should have a right to buy land in Poland?						
	Should have the right		Should not have the right		Don't know	
	rural population	farmers	rural population	farmers	rural population	farmers
the French	12	8	82	88	6	4
the Swedes	11	8	83	89	6	3
the Germans	12	7	83	90	5	3
the Czechs	11	8	84	89	5	3
the Austrians	12	8	83	89	5	3
the Dutch	13	8	82	89	5	3
the Russians	9	6	86	91	5	3

Source: Institute of Public Affairs

Table 5. The expected consequences of the sale of lands to foreigners (in %)

What, in your opinion, will be the consequences of selling land to foreigners						
	Yes		No		Don't know	
	rural population	farmers	rural population	farmers	rural population	farmers
the prices of land will go up	60	60	18	24	22	16
new jobs will be created	28	22	45	59	27	19
Polish agriculture will become more modern and competitive	32	27	38	48	30	25
Polish farmers will have to work for others, not on their own	75	81	12	11	13	8
the Germans will buy out land in Poland	78	85	8	6	14	9

Source: Institute of Public Affairs